

Conservation Division  
P. O. Box 26124  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87125

March 1, 1978

Mr. Ernest T. Wylie  
The Anaconda Company  
New Mexico Operations, Uranium Division  
P. O. Box 633  
Grants, New Mexico 87020

Dear Mr. Wylie:

During my January 10, 1978, inspection, we discussed the location and abandonment of older exploration boreholes in underground mining areas at the Jackpile-Paguate Minesite. Subsequently, I have discussed this matter with Al Czarnowsky, Area Mining Supervisor, and we have agreed on the following recommendations.

We do not believe that your proposal to abandon the older boreholes as they are located during the course of your ongoing drilling operations would provide sufficient coverage to insure that all such boreholes are located. Instead, we request that you conduct a systematic and thorough search for these holes throughout your mining leaseholds. Due to the somewhat "straight line" arrangement of most of the boreholes, we do not believe that such a search will be overly time consuming or expensive. Furthermore, during the search, you should record, preferably on maps, the holes located and properly conditioned for abandonment as well as all holes found already properly abandoned.

Proper plugging of the boreholes will be accomplished by filling the hole columns as much as possible with any remaining drill cuttings and then installing concrete plugs from the hole collars to 5 feet subsurface. The placement of monuments or markers in the concrete surface plugs to designate hole numbers and/or locations is optional. After plugging, any drill cuttings remaining on the surface should be spread out evenly, any open mud pits should be backfilled and graded, and any debris and/or litter should be cleaned up and removed from the site. You should also, especially at sites where excessive grading (cut-and-fill) has occurred, do as much as is reasonably possible to prevent or reduce erosion and to return the land surface to as near to its original condition as possible. Throughout these abandonment operations, you should be as careful as possible to avoid disturbing any vegetation that has re-established on the borehole sites.

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Since most of the older borehole sites that we have examined have exhibited fairly good revegetation by native species, we do not believe that seeding of the older sites is necessary, depending on the amount of disturbance created by the abandonment operations. However, we do recommend that you consult with the Pueblo of Laguna and the BIA on this matter, and we would appreciate receiving a copy of their comments and/or recommendations.

Finally, we would like to have an up-to-date map showing the locations of all surface boreholes within your mining leases. One such as Plate 3.1-2, "Map Showing Locations of Surface Drill Holes" (Scale 1" = 1000'), in your comprehensive mining and reclamation plan for the Jackpile-Paguate Minesite would be sufficient if it could be provided in a larger scale (1" = 200' would be ideal). On this map, you should also show the projected final limits of all the open-pit mining operations so that we can determine in what areas permanent plugging of surface drill holes will not be necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation in this matter, and I must apologize for being so tardy with this letter. If you have any questions, please contact me. I will be keeping in touch with you so that periodic inspections of the abandonments may be scheduled.

Sincerely yours,

(ORIG. SGD.) DALE C. JONES

DALE C. JONES  
Mining Engineer

cc: Governor, Pueblo of Laguna /